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VARIOUS BALLADS

EDITED BY G. L. KITTREDGE

I. THE CAMBRIC SHIRT

THIS version of Child, No. 2, was contributed by Miss Adina De Zavala, San Antonio, Tex. It came from Ireland (Dublin or there-about). Cf. this Journal, vol. xix, p. 130; vol. xxiii, p. 430; Child, I, 19; V, 284.

1. As I roved out through a green bank's side,
— Every rose grows merry in time,—
I met a fair maid and she wore a green gown,
And she said she would be a true lover of mine.
2. I told her to make me a cambric shirt
— Every rose grows merry in time —
Without either seam or needlework,
Before she could be a true lover of mine.
3. I told her to wash it in a spring well
— Every rose grows merry in time —
Where it never sprung nor a drop never run,
Before she could be a true lover of mine.
4. I told her to dry it on a green thorn
— Every rose grows merry in time —
Where it never blossomed since Adam was born,
And then she could be a true lover of mine.
5. "Now, my young man, as you've said so,
— Every rose grows merry in time,—
I hope you will answer me as many more,
Before you can be a true lover of mine."
6. I told him to get me an acre of land
— Every rose grows merry in time —
Between the salt water and the sea sand,
Before you can be a true lover of mine.
7. I told him to plough it with a ram's horn,
— Every rose grows merry in time,—
And sow it all over with pepper and corn (*or one pepper corn*),
Before you can be a true lover of mine.
8. I told him to thresh it in an egg shell,
— Every rose grows merry in time,—
And sell it in a town where nobody dwells,
Before you can be a true lover of mine.

9. "Then, when you've done and finished your work,
— Every rose grows merry in time,—
Return to me and I'll give you the shirt,
And then you will be a true lover of mine."

2. THE MAID FREED FROM THE GALLOWS

The following fragment of Child, No. 95, was given to Professor W. A. Neilson by an Irish servant-maid in 1909.

1. O, stop your hand, grand jury!
I think I see my sweetheart in full speed a-coming.
2. "Welcome here, dear sweetheart, welcome here to me!
Did you bring me e'er a money or e'er a fee?"
3. "I brought you ne'er a money nor ne'er a fee,
But I have got your pardon from the king, and come along with me!"

3. THE MERMAID

The following fragmentary version of "The Mermaid" (Child, No. 289) I took down on January 4, 1878, from the recitation of Mrs. Sarah G. Lewis, who was born in Boston, Mass., in 1799, but lived most of her days in Sandwich and Barnstable. Mrs. Lewis thought she learned the song about 1808. The version is interesting because of its relation to Child's A in the first stanza. For a text from Missouri, contributed by Professor Belden, see this Journal, vol. xxv, pp. 176-177; for the tune (from Vermont) see Barry, this Journal, vol. xxi, p. 78. For broadside texts, see, for example, "Roxburghe Ballads" (ed. Ebsworth, viii, 446), Harvard College Library, 25242.4 (I, 207), 25242.17 (III, 36, 102, IV, 16, 147). The ballad is contained in "The Forget Me Not Songster" (New York, Nafis & Cornish), p. 79.

1. One night as I lay on my bed,
A-taking of my ease,
Thinking what a lodge the poor sailors have
While they are on the seas.
2. Sailors they go through hot and cold,
Through many a bitter blast,
And oftentimes they are obliged
To cut away the mast.
3. [Forgotten by the reciter.]
4. Up speaks up our captain so bold,
And a clever old man was he:
"I've got a wife in fair England,
And a widow I'm afraid she will be."

5. Up speaks up our mate so bold,
And a clever man was he:
“I've got a wife in fair Ireland town,
And a widow I'm afraid she will be.”
 6. Up speaks up our bos'n so bold,
And a clever fellow was he:
“I've got a wife in fair Scotland,
And a widow I'm afraid she will be.”
 7. Up speaks up our little cabin-boy,
And a smart little fellow was he:
“I'm as sorry for my father and my mother too
As you are for your wives all three.”

8.

4

Taken down by me in January, 1878, from the recitation of Mrs. Sarah G. Lewis, whose recollection was that she learned it from her grandmother. Another copy, obtained (about 1888) from Mrs. John H. Paine of Barnstable, varies only in an occasional word, but lacks the fifth stanza.

- Once I did court a fair beauty bright,
And on her I fixed my whole heart's delight;
She granted me her love, which was for my love again,
Which I never had a reason at all to complain.
 - And when that her father he came for to know
I courted his daughter, his daughter also,
Then he urged on me that I should be pressed to sea,
To keep me from my true love's sweet company.
 - Then unto the seas I was forcèd for to go,
A-leaving of my true love in sorrow, grief, and woe;
And when that I came there to the man-of-war so bright,
I never could forget my own heart's delight.
 - And when I had servèd full seven long years,
Then home to my true love I straightway did repair;
And when that I came there, her father he replied,
“She's broke her heart for love, and for you she has died.”
 - “O, don't tell me no more than I'm able for to bear!
If she is in her silent grave, I wish that I was there.
Then I should have ease from sorrow, grief, and woe.
I know not where to wander nor where for to go.”

6. Then unto New Bedlam this young man was conveyed,
 And all for his true love's sake his senses were bereaved,
 With the rattling of his chains, with his fingers as he lay,
 Still calling for sweet Polly until the day he died.¹

5. THE SAILOR'S TRAGEDY

The following ballad was kindly sent to the Journal by William Nelson, Esq., of Paterson, N. J., December 9, 1912. Mr. Nelson writes: "I have had lying by me for several years two old manuscript ballads. From the style of handwriting, condition of the paper, and the age of the old lady from whom I got these manuscripts (she died two months ago, in her eighty-eighth year), I should think these manuscripts were seventy to eighty years old."

The piece here printed is a version (probably written down from memory) of "The Sailor's Tragedy." The Harvard College Library has two copies of the ballad in a garland (*The Sailor's Tragedy*. . . . Stirling. Printed by W. Macnie, 1825),² and another copy in another edition (same date and printer).³ A few variants from Macnie's text (*M.*) are given in footnotes.

A longer version, in a different style, is "Handsome Harry," of which the Harvard College Library has three American broadside copies, — 25242.5 (121), Nos. 4 and 5; 25242.5 (122), No. 4. All date, apparently, from early in the nineteenth century. The second was "Printed by Nathaniel Coverly, Jr. Milk-street, Corner Theatre-Alley, Boston." The title is, "Handsome Harry, Or, the Deceitful Young Man." The piece begins,—

Come, all you loyal hearted lovers,
 Come and listen unto me;
 And to you I will discover
 A most doleful perjury.

"Handsome Harry," almost word for word as in these broadsides, may be found in "The Forget Me Not Songster" (New York, Nafis & Cornish), pp. 133-136.

For ships stopped at sea because there is a murderer on board and for ghosts, see this Journal, vol. xx, pp. 261-264, and the ballads there cited. Add "The New York Trader," in which the captain, as the result of a voice that comes to him, confesses four murders to

¹ The last stanza, as recited by Mrs. Paine, runs as follows:—

Then home to New Bedlam this young man was conveyed;
 All for his true love's sake his senses were bereaved—
 The rattling of his chains on his straw bed as he lay,
 Calling for sweet Polly until his dying day.

² Harvard College Library, No. 11 in 25276.19 (II), No. 21 in 25276.23.

³ Harvard College Library, No. 21 in 25263.23.

the boatswain. There is a storm; the sailors throw the captain overboard, and a calm ensues. This begins,—

To a New York Trader, I did belong,
She was well built, both stout and strong,
Well rigg'd, well mann'd, well fit for sea,
Bound to New York in America.

“The New York Trader” may be found in John Ashton’s “Modern Street Ballads,” 1888, pp. 268–270. It is included in “The Forget Me Not Songster,” pp. 100–101. The Harvard College Library has four broadside copies,—25242.17, I, 118 (“Spencer, Broadstones, Bradford”: incomplete, seven stanzas); II, 31 (“George Walker, Jun., Printer, Sadler-Street, Durham”); VII, 87 (J. Catnach); XIII, 140 (H. Such).

Compare also “The Downfal of William Grismond: Or, A Lamentable Murder by him committed at Lainterdine, in the County of Hereford, the 12th. of March, 1650.” This is in the Roxburghe collection, III, 3606 (*Roxburghe Ballads*, ed. Ebsworth, viii, 69–71), in the Euing collection (No. 61, University of Glasgow), and among the Crawford ballads (No. 914; Crawford Catalogue, p. 326). There is a manuscript copy (from a broadside “in Ballard’s Collection”) among Bishop Percy’s papers in the Harvard College Library. See also an extract in John Masefield, “A Sailor’s Garland,” 1906, pp. 203–205. A shorter text (“William Guiseman”), improved from the broadside by tradition,¹ is in Kinloch’s MSS. (Harvard College Library), V, 43–46 (in the hand of James Beattie, son of James Beattie, Professor of Natural History in Marishall College, Aberdeen). From this Kinloch printed (with a few slight changes) in his “Ancient Scottish Ballads,” 1827, pp. 156–159. Christie’s text is altered from Kinloch’s, as he says himself (“Traditional Ballad Airs,” II, 172–173).

The other manuscript piece mentioned by Mr. Nelson is a copy (in 56 stanzas) of “Jemmy & Nancy or the Yarmouth Tragedy.” It begins,—

Lovers I pray Lend an ear to my story
And take an Example by this constant pair
How love a young damsel did blast in her glory,
Twas beautifull Nancy of Yarmouth we hear.

The copy is much better spelled and much more correct than that of “The Sailor’s Tragedy,” and seems to have been made from print.²

¹ See Child, II, 16.

² For “The Yarmouth Tragedy” see *The Forget Me Not Songster*, pp. 86–92; Glyde, *The Norfolk Garland*, pp. 266–273. Cf. *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, II, 113–114; III, 103, 272; Christie, *Traditional Ballad Airs*, II, 282. The Harvard College Library has several copies in garlands and broadsides,—25242.2, fols. 8, 25; 25242.3, fol. 87 v°; 25242.4, I, 94, 25242.5.7, p. 13; 25242.10.5, fol. 276; 25242.17, VI, 91, X, 147; 25252.0, No. 51; 25271.20; No. 4; 25271.21, No. 4; 25276.4, No. 7; 25276.5, No. 17; 25276.7, No. 8.

[THE SAILOR'S TRAGEDY]¹

1. I am a Salor all by my right²
and on the seas took great delight
A³ female sex I did begile
at length two were by me with child
2. I promise to be true to both
and bound myself under an oath
to marry them if I had life
but one of them I made my wife.
3. The other being left along⁴
She crys you fals deluded⁵ man
by me you have done a wicked thing
which publick shame will on me bring
4. In to her present⁶ shade she went
her present shame for to prevent
soon as she finish up her strife
she cut her tender thred of life
5. She hung herself all on A Tree
two men a hunting did her see
her flesh by beast was bitterly⁷ tore
which greavd these young men's heart full sore
6. Straight they went and cut her down
and in her bosom the note was found
this note was written in Letters larg
Berry me not I do the charge
7. But here on earth let me lie
for every man that passes by
that they by me a warning take
can see what follows ear to late
8. If⁸ he is fals I do protest
he on earth shall have no rest
and it was said she plagud him so
that he to sea was forc'd to go
9. As he was on the main mast high
A little boat he chanst to spy
and in it was a gost so grim
which made him trimble in every limb

¹ No title in manuscript.² M: The.³ M: the silent shade.⁴ M: alone.⁵ M: basely.⁶ M: and home I write.⁷ M: deluding.⁸ M: As.

10. Then down to the captain this young man goes
unto the captain his mind is closd¹
here is a spirrit coming hence
so captain stand at my defence
11. Then out on Deck the captain goes
he sonest spide the fatal gost
Captain say she you must incan²
with speed help me to such a man
12. In nethealen³ this young man died
In nethealen³ his body lies
Captain said she do not say so
for heris in your ship below
13. And if you stand at his defence
A mighty Storm I will send hence
What will cause you and your men to weep
And Leave you sleeping in the deep.
14. And to the cabben the captain goes
And brought this young man to his foes
On him she fixed her eye so grim
which made him trimble in every limb
- 15.⁴ And to preserve both ship and man
And in the Boat she forced him⁵
The boat she sunk in a flash of fire
Which made the salors all admire
16. Now you that knows that on love belong
Now you hear my mournfull song
The truth to them that ear you mind⁶
Do not delude poor woman kind.

6. JOHN HARDY

Professor John H. Cox, of West Virginia University, Morgantown, sends the following ballad, as collected by one of his pupils, Mr. E. C. Smith. It was written down from memory by Walter Mick, of Ireland, West Virginia, in March, 1913. He learned it from hearing it sung in

¹ M: for to disclose.

² M: and can.

³ M: St. Helena.

⁴ M has the following stanza between 14 and 15 of the MS.: —

It was well known I was a maid,
When first by you I was betray'd,
I am a spirit come for you,
You beguil'd me once but I have you now.

⁵ M: Into the boat they forced him.

⁶ M: Be true to one whatever you mind.

that community. Mr. Smith says that the ballad is very well known in Central West Virginia, and that several versions exist. Stanzas 6-8 belong to "The Lass of Roch Royal" (Child, No. 76). A North Carolina version of "John Hardy" (in four stanzas) was contributed to this Journal (vol. xxii, p. 247) by Miss Louise Rand Bascom.

1. John Hardy was a little farmer boy,
Sitting on his father's knee.
Says he, "I fear the C. & O. Road
Will be the ruination of me,
Poor boy,
Will be the ruination of me."
2. John Hardy got to be a desperate man,
Carried a pistol and a razor every day,
Shot a nigger through the heel in a Chinese camp,
And you ought of seen that nigger get away,
Poor boy,
And you ought of seen that nigger get away.
3. John Hardy's mother ran up to him,
Saying, "Son, what have you done?"
"I murdered a man in a Chinese camp,
And now I am sentenced to be hung,
Poor boy,
And now I am sentenced to be hung."
4. John Hardy's father went to the judge,
Saying, "What do you think will be done?"
The judge he answer with a quick reply,
"I'm afraid John Hardy will be hung,
Poor boy,
I'm afraid John Hardy will be hung."
5. John Hardy was standing in a dice-room door, —
He did not have a nickel to his name, —
Along came a yaller girl, threw a dollar on the board,
Saying, "Deal John Hardy in the game,
Poor boy,"
Saying, "Deal John Hardy in the game."
6. "O who will shoe your pretty little feet,
And who will glove your hands,
And who will kiss your sweet rosy lips,
When I'm in a foreign land,
Poor boy,
When I'm in a foreign land?"
7. "My father will shoe my pretty little feet,
My mother will glove my hands,
John Hardy will kiss my sweet rosy lips
When he comes from a foreign land,
Poor boy,
When he comes from a foreign land."

8. John Hardy married a loving wife,
And children he had three;
He called to him his oldest son,
Saying, "Son, make a man like me,
 Poor boy,"
Saying, "Son, make a man like me."

9. John Hardy married a loving wife,
And children he had three;
He cared no more for his wife and child
Than the rocks in the bottom of the sea,
 Poor boy,
Than the rocks in the bottom of the sea.